POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THIRD ASSISTANT POSTMASTER-GENERAL,
WASHINGTON, D. C., February 11, 1888.

Editors Botanical Gazette:

SIRS—Your letter of the 4th inst., addressed to the postmaster-general, has been referred to this office.

Under the recent act of congress in relation to permissible printing and writing upon second, third and fourth-class matter, there may be placed upon specimens of dried plants, or on any other natural history specimens, to be transmitted by mail, without subjecting them to other than the fourth-class rate of postage, labels bearing the written names of the specimens, locality and date of collection, and the collector's name—where these inscriptions are wholly for purpose of identification or description.

The labels you submit, and which are herewith returned, are therefore permissible. [These labels are of the usual form, giving the above data.—EDS.]

As this specific ruling under the act referred to has never been promulgated, it is not unlikely that specimens sent by mail with such written descriptions will be subjected by postmasters occasionally to delay, and it may be to improper exactions of postage. To prevent this as much as possible, publicity will be at once given to the ruling.

Yours, very respectfully, H. R. HARRIS,
Third Assistant Postmaster General.

Further notes on imbedding.—In the July number of the BOTANICAL GAZETTE for 1887, p. 172, the editors noticed a method for imbedding delicate plant tissues which I described in the *Bot. Centralblatt.* Since the publication I have had opportunity of gaining more experience in the use of this method, leading me to modify it slightly. In the first place, I now use absolute alcohol, where I formerly only used the strong methylated spirit of commerce. Further, I now leave specimens to be imbedded for twenty-four hours in pure oil of cloves (after they have sunk), twenty-four hours in pure turpentine, twenty-four hours in turpentine saturated with paraffine, and twenty-four hours in melted paraffine. Although much more time is thus required, the results are more reliable, and I can now imbed, by my method, without previous staining in borax-carmine, and thus considerable time and trouble is saved.

Perhaps I may be allowed to add that sections fixed to the slide with collodion stain very well with Bismarck brown, and can then easily be photographed. Bismarck brown[1] stains all cell walls. If Kleinenberg's hæmatoxylin is used in addition, the cellulose walls turn blue, while all other walls retain their yellow color, and thus a nice double stain is effected. If sections of young tissues are treated in this way, the process of lignification in vessels can be easily traced; and if the hæmatoxylin is allowed to act a sufficient time on the sections, the structure of the protoplasm will be brought out.—SELMAR SCHÖNLAND, *Botanic Garden, Oxford.*

[1] I prepare the solution of Bismarck brown in the following way: Saturate 1 part of absolute alcohol with Bismarck brown, and add 2 parts of distilled water.—A solution in 70 p. c. alcohol, as often used by zoölogists, does not stain lignified cell walls very readily, and the solution in water which has been heretofore used by botanists is said not to keep very well.